DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 339 576 RC 018 418

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TITLE The University's Responsibility to Rural Education--A Model. (A Unique Thing Happened on the Way to Reform).
PUB DATE 11 Oct 91
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Rural Education Association (83rd, Jackson, MS, October 10-14, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS American Indians; *College School Cooperation; Demonstration Programs; Doctoral Programs; *Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; Graduate Study; Higher Education; Off Campus Facilities; *Outreach Programs; *Rural Education; *Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS *Northern Arizona Univ Center Excellence in Educ

ABSTRACT

This paper details the efforts of Northern Arizona University's Center for Excellence in Education (CEE) to improve teacher education in rural areas. Ten regional field sites were established over a 2-year period throughout the state of Arizona. From these regional sites, field coordinators administer classes in off-campus settings, advise students on degree programs, and oversee other CEE outreach projects. The following are examples of CEE partnerships: (1) Arizona Western College, a 2-year community college, offers upper division undergraduate and graduate courses in education; (2) students at the Point Loma Nazarene College in San Diego (California) can earn doctoral degrees in Educational Leadership; (3) a Master's Degree in Bilingual/Multicultural Education is offered on site in a 90% Hispanic school district; (4) lower division courses necessary for teacher certification are offered under agreements with six Arizona Community Colleges; (5) preparation for native teachers to teach in native schools are offered in cooperation with Navajo Community College (Arizona); (6) returning Peace Corps Volunteers teach in reservation schools while working toward certification; (7) model programs have been developed and implemented in two reservation schools through CEE; and (8) CEE supplies doctoral students or faculty as "administrators-on-loan" for districts who have found themselves without a chief administrative officer. In addition to helping improve rural education, CEE's off-campus programs have proved profitable for Northern Arizona University. (KS)

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The University's Responsibility to Rural Education - A Model
(A Unique Thing Happened on the Way to Reform)

A presentation to:
The National Rural Education Association 83rd Annual Conference
Jackson, Mississippi
October 11, 1991

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"Have state universities negated their responsibility to rural education in America?" This is a question posed in the proposal for presenting at this conference. Based on my observations of university behavior toward rural education I am convinced that a majority of state universities not only do not provide direct assistance to rural schools in America, they feel no obligation to assume responsibility for such assistance. There are a multitude of rationalizations for this position by state universities, but that is another presentation and will have to wait until another time.

There are, however, some significant exceptions to this generalization. I proposed to talk to you today about one of those exceptions. Northern Arizona University accepted a stronger mission to rural Arizona in July of 1984. Permit me a few minutes to discuss Northern Arizona University and the conditions leading to this increased emphasis. I believe this will help you better understand why this state university entered into a mission that is "too expensive" in this time of limited financial resources.

NAU is located in Flagstaff, Arizona. Flagstaff has a population of approximately 45,000 and is located at an altitude of 7,000 feet. The University is located on the massive Colorado Plateau and is surrounded by areas of unbelievable beauty, which include the Grand Canyon, numerous ruins of early Indian Cultures, and is the home reservation of several Native American tribes. All of the territory surrounding Flagstaff is rural, for example the Flagstaff Unified School District includes some 4,500 square miles. (90 miles long and 50 miles wide)

NAU has a resident student population of approximately 16,000 students, houses nine schools and colleges and is recognized as one of the finest universities in the country. NAU is a university born out of the rich tradition of teacher education, established as the Arizona Normal School in 1899. Teacher education is still the flagship program on the NAU Campus. NAU offers one of only four teacher education programs in the state (NAU, ASU, UA, and Grand Canyon University).

In the 1980's NAU, like the rest of the nation, was swept up in the national education crisis. Numerous national and state reports were issued (you remember them as well as I do). These reports were critical of the job being done in

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education. They said:

Kids are not learning as well as they should.
Teachers are not teaching as well as they could.
Graduates are not performing as well as they should.

Folks were worried. There was no real sense of direction. This presentation will attempt to tell how one institution responded to this crisis and its efforts to chart a course which resulted in a stronger commitment to rural education.

That response came in a defining moment under the leadership of Eugene M. Hughes, President of Northern Arizona University, with appropriate support from the Arizona Legislature and the Arizona State Board of Education. That support came in the form of additional revenue and certification flexibility to experiment with alternative delivery systems.

The NAU College of Education was abolished as of July 1, 1984 and replaced with the Center for Excellence in Education. The hierarchical administrative structure and the traditional department organization were abandoned. A new type of organization was installed. A new leadership team was put into place and the call went out for support personnel.

Faculty advocates for reform from within existing faculty were identified and supported and a contingent of new people were recruited. Teacher education became a campus-wide responsibility. Public school practitioners, business, community and professional leaders outside of the teacher education establishment became partners in the reform.

This organizational matrix was the result of years of work. With this structure the Center for Excellence in Education was able to evolve as different needs and uses of resources were recognized. This is not to say that we did not encounter a few potholes along the way. The road we followed was often very rough and we were often required to build our own detours before we could continue. The process took us through major curriculum revision of every course and program we offered, it required that we revisit often our traditional notions of course and program delivery, it required that we rethink the traditional university reward system, but most importantly we were required to rethink the traditional role of the university professor.

As a part of the redesign of the Center for Excellence in Education we identified specific areas to focus our efforts. The Professional Programs Division was assigned the responsibility for curricular and program (including degrees)revisions, the Division for Student Services was responsible for restructuring support services to students (including advising, admissions, student teaching internships and working with the University's Career Planning and Placement Center), the Division for Native Education's responsibility was to develop a meaningful programs of service and support for all schools on the Indian reservations in Arizona, and the Division for Field Services assumed the major tasks associated with the outreach and delivery of our courses, programs and services off-campus. It is this Division of

Field Services on which I will concentrate my remarks to you this afternoon.

The mission of this division was to establish partnerships with entities throughout the state, at all different levels, designed to further opportunities for excellence in education. It became most evident to us that our efforts to improve the quality of our graduates as well as increase the number of those graduates would take several years. We determined that the need for service to schools and teachers required that we develop a process for moving off-campus and into the schools immediately.

To accomplish this goal, ten regional field sites were established over a two year period throughout the state of Arizona. From these regional sites, Field Coordinators administer classes offered in off-campus settings, advise students on degree programs, and oversee other CEE outreach projects.

The types of partnerships are as varied as the needs of each field site area. NAU-Yuma is a good example. In Yuma, Arizona, CEE has entered into a partnership with Arizona Western College, a two-year community college, to offer both upper division undergraduate and graduate courses in education, leading to bachelor and master's degrees. This regional site as since become a 'stand alone University unit' (a branch campus) as the result of the success of CEE's program there.

Another example (separate from our 10 original sites) can be found at Point Loma Nazarene College in San Diego, California, where CEE has extended outreach across state lines, to work with students at Pt. Loma to earn doctoral degrees in Educational Leadership from the Center for Excellence in Education. Today approximately one-third of the CEE Educational Leadership doctoral candidates now come from the Point Loma campus. CEE graduates occupy high level administrative positions in almost every school district in southern California. This program has graduated over 400 doctorates and continues to grow.

Pt. Loma students complete residency requirements for the doctorate during summer sessions on the NAU Campus in Flagstaff. CEE professors travel to San Diego to work with students during the regular academic year and when necessary dissertation defenses can be held in San Diego to accommodate student schedules.

Nogales, Arizona is a community located near the Arizona-Mexico boarder. The school district has a population of approximately 90% Hispanic and their need for Bilingually certified teachers resulted in the establishment of a Master's Degree in Bilingual/Multicultural Education from CEE. This degree is offered in full on site utilizing facilities and resources of the Nogales School District. Students do not have to come to the NAU Campus for any part of this program.

Two plus Two agreements have been established with six Arizona Community Colleges (all serving rural Arizona). Under these agreements the local community college offers all lower division courses required and the Center for Excellence delivers the upper division courses required for the bachelor's degree and Arizona teacher certification. Courses are delivered by NAU resident faculty traveling to

the on site location, by carefully screened part-time faculty from the vicinity and via television.

NAU currently operates a land based interactive microwave television link with Arizona Western Community College in Yuma, Arizona and also operates a satellite up link from the NAU campus that covers the entire United States. Both of these delivery systems were developed as a direct result of the demand for services by school districts and the necessity of providing relief for campus faculty required to travel so extensively to delivery courses off-campus. The technology has permitted NAU to expand offering in a multitude of areas, i.e. assisting Arizona school districts comply with recent state initiatives to teach in foreign language to elementary students. CEE professors still spend a tremendous amount of time on the road to delivery courses. These professors travel by car, university airplane and commercial airline service in response to requests for assistance from schools throughout the state.

The commitment to rural education at the Center for Excellence in Education goes far beyond the offering of classes and degrees.

Efforts on the Indian Reservations of Arizona include:
Development and initiation of the STEP program in cooperation with Navajo Community College and the Navajo Tribal Depart of Education. This program is design to prepare native teachers for native schools on the reservation, permitting students to complete the elementary education degree and become fully certified through institutional endorsement at Northern Arizona University.

An agreement with the United States Peace Corps provides the opportunity for returning Peace Corps Volunteers to teach in Reservation schools while working for full teacher certification and Master's Degree in Education. The Peace Corps Volunteer has two years of experience in teaching in remote, isolated underprivileged areas of the world and provides an excellent resource for Reservation schools.

Hotevilla Bacavi Contract School is a small school operated under a contract by the Hopi Indian Tribe and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This elementary school entered into a formal partnership with the Center for Excellence in Education to develop and implement a model elementary school on the Hopi Reservation. This project has resulted in a significantly improved curriculum for Hopi children and a highly trained school board.

The Grayhills High School is a contract high school located in Tuba City on the Navajo Indian Reservation. This project involves the entire Northern Arizona University and has developed a curriculum based on academic academies within the high school. Professors from every college and school on the NAU campus participate in this project. This project promises to be one of the most successful partnerships of any university working with Native Americans in the country.

The Peaks Project prepares Native American teachers to work with handicapped students on the Reservation. This programs leads to a Master's Degree in Special

Education. The Jacob Javits Native American Grant, "Getting Gifted" is a CEE partnership with with public schools to provide educational opportunities for gifted Native American students.

Services provided through the Field Services Division of the Center for Excellence in Education include the full range of support that can often make the difference in success and failure in rural schools. Often rural schools have no place to go to seek assistance. Our goal is for any rural school district in Arizona needing assistance to think immediately of Northern Arizona University's Center for Excellence in Education. Our goal is to either provide the assistance through CEE or to serve as a broker to obtain the services needed.

Our support has included providing classes for schools to prepare North Central Association self-studies and prepare for accreditation visits. CEE offers more such classes than the other two state universities combined.

As school districts attempt to comply with the massive number of state regulations and laws, the Center for Excellence in Education assist district with complete compliance reviews.

Administrator-on-Loan is a unique service offered by CEE. Recently two school districts have found themselves without a chief administrative officer. In both cases calls to CEE resulted in our being of assistance. In one case a doctoral graduate student completing her degree assumed interim superintendent duties for a semester as the district sought a permanent replacement. In the second case the Center assigned a professor from the Educational Administration Unit to the district full time for a semester to serve as the district's superintendent. CEE is currently working with a district to provide administrative coverage while their superintendent serves on a North Central Association accrediting team to Europe.

Just recently the President of Northern Arizona University signed a formal agreement with the Arizona Small and Rural Schools Association to develop a formal working relationship with the Center for Excellence in Education and the Association. This partnership will extend to the state's small and rural schools many of the same services and support provided through the Center's "I-40 plus One" superintendents' group established several years ago as a communications link for rural schools with each other and with the Center for Excellence in Education.

A bit of number crunching will give you a feel for the magnitude of the Center's efforts off-campus in support of schools and school districts. In 1983-84 the year before the creation of the Center, the College of Education offered 2,500 student credit hours off-campus (this equates to a head count of approximately 800). In the 1990-91 academic school year the Center delivered in excess of 9,300 student credit hours off-campus per semester (a head count of 3,100 individuals per semester). This Fall - 1991- the Center is offering some 275 classes off-campus throughout the state of Arizona.

The Two plus Two program with Arizona community collegeshas produced some

300 graduates with Bachelor Degrees in Education alone.

In 1983-84 the College of Education graduated a total of 175 students with Bachelor of Science in Education degrees. In 1991-92 we anticipate graduating over 400 students earning a Bachelor's Degree in Education. This year over 500 students will earn Master's Degrees and another 50 will earn their doctorate.

We know the on-campus program is profitable for the University but what about the off-campus effort? If we apply a bit of simple arithmetic we find that at a cost of $80 per student credit hour the Center's off-campus program will generate $1,488,000 in 1991-92 for the University in tuition alone. The university will also receive state support for each full-time-equivalent student in the off-campus program. This state support will amount to approximately $4,000,000 in additional revenue for the University. Without going into a detailed analysis of the cost of operating the Division of Field Services in the Center for Excellence in Education, I can assure you the return on our effort is ample.

In closing I would like to indicate that the regional sites established by the Center for Excellence in Education to support educational efforts throughout the state have as of July 1991 become University-wide regional sites and each site will now support the off-campus efforts of every college and school of the University. This move undoubtedly resulted from the success of our efforts in the Center.

I wish also to tell you that the person responsible for the success of CEE's efforts on behalf of rural schools in Arizona is Dr. Ray Ver Velde, Professor and Associate Executive Director for the Center for Excellence in Education's Education/Field Services Division.

Additional information is available by writing:

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